

1990—Alliances from the Rubble

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Years in Cultural Studies

ABSTRACT At the dawn of the 1990s, the world was undergoing dramatic transformation—and cultural studies was no exception to this force. By looking at the Illinois conference, the Oklahoma conference, and the special issue of *Cultural Studies* edited by Rosa Linda Fregoso and Angie Chabram, we evaluate how cultural studies reacted to the sweeping tide of reformation and re-commitment of the 1990s. Ultimately, these events prove that, in 1990, cultural studies made the most of the opportunity to reflect, listen to its critics, and change for the better, and each event can serve as a valuable touchstone as we continue to construct and deconstruct our discipline.

KEYWORDS 1990, cultural studies

1990 was a year of blooming popularity for cultural studies.¹ Decades after the fact, it seems predictable that cultural studies, like so much else, would be bolstered and renewed in the transformative moment the nineties brought in. Michael Berube notes, recalling the bubble's growth, "In the late 1980s and early 1990s, we heard (and I believed) that cultural studies would fan out across the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, inducing them to become at once more self-critical and more open to public engagement. Some people even suggested, in either hope or fear, that cultural studies would become the name for the humanities and social sciences in toto."² While the latter never came to pass, and there are conflicting explanations of how cultural studies notably managed to snag the limelight, the energy surrounding cultural studies in 1990 seemed to promise extensive growth and untapped potential.

As interest in the field grew, cultural studies scholars appeared intent on integrating themselves into institutions with access to classrooms and student populations that had previously been unavailable to them.³ Taking advantage of this fragile moment was a primary concern for cultural studies, as key disciplines had already discounted the field as a non-discipline with unsustainable or outright problematic theoretical and political leanings.⁴ The rapid inflation of interest gave cultural studies leverage with which to integrate into other fields, such as literary criticism. Because of this, 1990 was a year of outreach for cultural studies—a year of coordinated, persistent efforts to engage other disciplines, be welcomed into them, and find a space dedicated to cultural studies from which to engage them. This cooperation resulted in a push towards both interdisciplinarity and institutionalization—a set of conflicting goals brought to a head several times in conferences and publications in 1990.⁵

While cultural studies engaged with whether to and how to institutionalize cultural studies in an academic home, there were multiple inferences that American scholars were not acknowledging the already established history of cultural studies in other parts of the

world (namely British, Canadian, and Australian).⁶ This tension was not formally resolved in the 1990s and arguably continues to persist and evolve well into the 2010s with calls to re-politicize cultural studies scholarship.⁷ However, at the time, it seems, the general interest in cultural studies deviated substantially from American scholars simply “paying dues” to our British and Australian lineage, and instead delved into interrogating the problematic foundations of this lineage from methodological, theoretical, and institutional standpoints. The conferences and publications of 1990 were deeply affected by the divide between those wishing to stay close to the British and Australian roots of cultural studies and those looking to explore the unique perspectives of other disciplines.

The simultaneous desires in cultural studies during 1990 to integrate (but remain undiluted), institutionalize (but remain critically capable), and reflect (while preserving canon) created a unique moment of production, in which seasoned and opinionated cultural studies scholars had to contend with the perspectives of other disciplines. These interrogations fundamentally challenged the core methodologies, theories, and the institutionalization of cultural studies. However, while the year 1990 provided a challenge for cultural studies, the way this field dealt with that challenge reflects an honest commitment to intellectual rigor, openness, and persistence. In this essay, we have chosen to discuss three key events of 1990 that represent this commitment: first, the April 1990 academic conference “Cultural Studies Now and in the Future” held at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (commonly referred to as the “Illinois Conference”), which demonstrates a commitment to internal reflection; second, the October 1990 academic conference “Crossing the Disciplines: Cultural Studies in the 1990s” held at the University of Oklahoma (commonly referred to as the “Oklahoma Conference”), which exhibits an openness to critique and conversation; and third, issue three of volume four in *Cultural Studies*, the journal’s special issue “Chicana/o Cultural Representations: Reframing Alternative Critical Discourses,” which displays an interest in forging productive relationships between cultural studies and disciplines which critiqued it on a substantive level (such as literary criticism and Chicana/o studies, which we feature in this summary).⁸

The Year 1990

It would be arguably irresponsible not to address the events surrounding the frenzied growth of cultural studies. Since its formal and professional beginnings at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, political and societal contexts have been a key influence on and motivator for scholarly projects within cultural studies. It is no surprise, then, that at a major intersection for cultural studies, manifested in a reflection upon our foundations and an invitation for revision, that there were many significant political and social events taking place across the globe animated by that same exigency. In early 1990, George H. W. Bush’s presidency began, promising a new engagement with American militaristic foreign policy in his inaugural speech, reflecting on the mistakes made by his political predecessors during the Vietnam War.⁹ 1990 also marked the beginning stages of German reunification, as East Germans participated in the first (and only) free election in the German Democratic Republic.¹⁰ Margaret Thatcher, who had been facing leadership challenges, resigned in November 1990, while Mikhail Gorbachev was elected as the first (and only) president of the USSR.¹¹ Meanwhile, tensions broke in the Middle East, culminating with Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait in August of 1990 and American (and allied forces’) intervention through the Gulf War.¹² In South America, the elections mandated in the newly-drawn (1987) Nicaraguan constitution saw Violetta Chamorro

became Nicaragua's first (and only) female president on the promise of bringing an end to the decades-long Contra wars.¹³

Alongside these political transformations, concerns about the environment began to gain attention, marked by several environmental tragedies, such as an oil spill along Ninety Mile Beach in East Gippsland, Victoria, Australia. Following these environmental crises, the European Union established the European Environmental Agency, and the United States passed the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act.¹⁴ Technologically, 1990 was also a time of new beginnings; ARPANET (the modern internet's American military predecessor) was decommissioned in late February of 1990.¹⁵ As ARPANET was decommissioned, Tim Berners-Lee, a British computer scientist, began formal work on establishing the World Wide Web in October of 1990.¹⁶

While the events considered influential here were not explicitly discussed in most of the following literature or conference proceedings, it is likely that the zeitgeist of revisions and commitments which swirled around 1990 and settled in cultural studies started from the energy of new foundations these events created.

Breaking Foundations: The "Illinois Conference"

The recrudescence of 1990, emphasized in the culmination of dramatic political changes within Europe as well as the "renewed vow" of former President Bush's foreign policy, seems to have likewise animated the desire of cultural studies to reflect on their methodological, theoretical, and institutional constructions. Reflections on discipline and method were central features at what is colloquially known as the 1990 "Illinois Conference," held at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in April 1990 and entitled "Cultural Studies Now and in the Future." This conference was the first major cultural studies conference in the United States, taking place amidst a fast-paced growth in cultural studies in American scholarship.¹⁷ The edited volume *Cultural Studies* consolidated key papers presented at the conference and various related discussions.¹⁸ Editors Cary Nelson, Paula A. Treichler, and Lawrence Grossberg presented selected essays, chosen for a variety of reasons: the selections that aligned most with the period of renewal and reestablishment at the time were those included in order to highlight works that "represented a viable alternative tradition in cultural studies."¹⁹ However, the simultaneous desire for cultural studies to expand and reinvigorate its constituency also motivated inclusion of selected essays "to present cultural studies as a genuinely international phenomenon and to help people compare and contrast the work being done in different countries," as well as other works not explicitly or entirely within cultural studies which were included because they "had the potential for productive alliances with cultural studies."²⁰

The use of sixteen organizing themes allowed presenters to put multiple key concerns within cultural studies in conversation and conflict with one another; these combinations exposed significant tensions that were felt and articulated within the field of cultural studies.²¹ One of these significant tensions was the changing landscape of methodologies utilized in cultural studies research in 1990, likely brought to a head by cultural studies' engagement with several previously separate methodological approaches, such as literary criticism, ethnography, and semiotics. For example, Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg

address cultural studies' complicated relationship with methodology, claiming that there is no distinct methodology for cultural studies, that "the choice of research practices depends on the questions that are asked."²² Cultural studies had eschewed adopting formalized disciplinary practices, such as a "standardized" methodology because they "carry with them a heritage of disciplinary investments and exclusions and a history of social effects that cultural studies would often be included to repudiate."²³

Despite the fundamental distance cultural studies has placed between itself and methodological designation, supporters of methodological specificity, and in particular, supporters of ethnography, made space for themselves during the Illinois conferences. These essays, among others predating the Illinois Conference and published since *Cultural Studies*, sought to illustrate ethnography's particular potential within cultural studies and propose a methodological standard for how to conduct ethnography within context. Essays on this topic included Rosalind Brunt's "Engaging With the Popular: Audiences for Mass Culture and What to Say About Them," James Clifford's "Traveling Cultures," John Fiske's "Cultural Studies and the Culture of Everyday Life," Simon Frith's "The Cultural Study of Popular Music," and Constance Penley's "Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Study of Popular Culture."²⁴ Brunt's article critiques cultural studies' "simplified account of 'engagement' with the media text" observed in Stuart Hall's model of encoding/decoding, Frank Parkin's schema of "value systems," and David Morley's Nationwide study.²⁵ Utilizing Paul Willis to articulate ethnography's contribution to cultural studies, Brunt argued for its capability "of being surprised, of reaching knowledge not prefigured in one's starting paradigms" and illustrates its productivity through her previous work on media and British politics with Jordin.²⁶ In the discussion section, Sher Parks offered that ethnography, or becoming a participant with the group being studied, is a way to resist the traditional researcher/subject power relationship; Brunt responded to this suggestion by stating that such an approach would be as useful as the questions being asked allows.²⁷ Clifford's essay complicated the traditionally (anthropologically) held assumptions about ethnography and culture by questioning "how cultural analysis constitutes its objects—societies, traditions, communities, identities—in spatial terms through specific spatial practices of research."²⁸

Forming Alliances: The "Oklahoma Conference"

Likely spurred on by the cooperative spirit of 1990, characterized by German reunification and improving relations with the USSR, cultural studies took important steps to create lasting and fertile relationships with other disciplines. It was only after *Cultural Studies* (the edited book), which emphasized interdisciplinary scholarship, was published in 1992 that *Cultural Studies* (the journal) began featuring a handful of pages devoted to "other journals in the field of cultural studies."²⁹ However, the call to expand and multiply the usefulness and applications of cultural studies was an undercurrent to much of the exigence of the "Illinois Conference." At a time when cultural studies was looking to make its way into other fields, allies to the field made a sustained effort to open doors. Robert Con Davis-Uniado, who was by education a literary theorist and critic, was among the earliest allies to cultural studies in literary criticism. Con Davis-Uniado strongly felt that literary criticism and cultural studies were beneficial bedfellows, arguing:

The study of criticism can profitably be situated as a part—and a leading part—of the study of culture . . . In fact, a strong argument can be made that the texts we customarily call literature constitute a privileged site where the most important social, psychological, and cultural forces combine and contend.³⁰

However, there were notable detractors from this frame, including John Deely, the contemporary editor of *Semiotics*, and Aijaz Ahmad, an influential theorist in the field.³¹ Ahmad particularly disliked American cultural studies, which he argued had moved away from the Marxist political roots of British cultural studies. A committed Marxist, Ahmad has consistently critiqued postmodern and imperialist approaches to cultural criticism, most notably in his responses to Frederic Jameson and Edward Said. These critiques, while multifaceted, always return to the ways that postmodern approaches to cultural studies lack the capability of Marxist intervention.³² He echoed the thoughts of Meaghan Morris, who argued in her own 1990 publication that the sudden expansion of cultural studies in the 1990s served “the immediate political function,” of discrediting “grumpy feminists and cranky leftists.”³³ Despite the detraction of influential peers, Con Davis-Uniado organized a conference in 1990 to investigate how cultural studies might be used in other disciplines, sponsored by the Oklahoma Project for Discourse and Theory and scheduled to take place in conjunction with the 16th Annual Meeting of the Semiotics Society of America.³⁴ The conference, entitled “Crossing Disciplines: Cultural Studies in the ‘90s,” featured presentations from various disciplines, including semiotics, psychology, and composition.³⁵ The presentations resulted in a few publications, most of which were published *Semiotics*, and are available through their archives. Nelson and Jeffrey R. Di Leo were (and are) at odds on the success of the conference intellectually. Nelson argues (among other things) that semiotics could not integrate into cultural studies as an apolitical entity. In contrast, Di Leo rebuts that semiotics was never an apolitical discipline. He roundly rejects Nelson’s critiques of the conference’s lack of knowledge or attention to the “British history” of cultural studies, noting that the conference (which was meant as an introduction to cultural studies for outsiders) was unfairly criticized for attempting to create community and intellectual cooperation.³⁶ However, despite the continued disagreement as to the intellectual impact of the “Oklahoma Conference,” and a general lack of notable citations, the conference makes up for as a marker of the start of a functional and beneficial relationship between cultural studies and other disciplines, providing access to fields with larger student populations and public support.³⁷

While it is notable that the “Oklahoma Conference” is generally well-accepted as being among the first of many attempts to investigate cultural studies’ formal and professional relationship with other disciplines, it is perhaps more important for the symbolism of Con Davis-Uniado’s own turn towards cultural studies, and his efforts to deliver that perspective to students in his field. Con Davis-Uniado’s integration of cultural studies into the third and fourth editions of his undergraduate textbook, *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*, while treating the discipline slightly better than neutrally, was a meaningful introduction of theory to a broader audience. Including these authors and theories within a literary criticism textbook shows an effort to decenter the fear that such an elitist representation might unintentionally discredit the politics of these movements and projects a choice to instead engage on a theoretical level what these theories might provide for literary critics as tools for their politics.

Deely’s simultaneous 1990 *Semiotics* article argued that semiotic interests needed to generalize into a foundational educational department to ensure their survival rather than attaching itself to “fashionable” studies of the time (which we cannot help but read as a

not-so-subtle jab at cultural studies' sudden popularity). Despite this position, Con Davis-Uniada's organization of the 1990 "Oklahoma Conference" reflects a turn by scholars in semiotics, and indeed elsewhere, to engage with critical studies despite a worry that it might "succeed as a coherent practice but fail as a cultural critique."³⁸ This was a fortuitous turn, as the cracked door that the 1990 "Oklahoma Conference" represented soon turned to an open one; many scholars found themselves not only interested in cultural studies but deeply involved with it (including Con Davis-Uniada himself, who starting in the late 1990s turned towards work within American studies and Chicana/o studies).³⁹

Rebuilding, Together: Productive Revisions Alongside Our Critics

During this time, cultural studies struggled with its political foundations in a rapidly expanding world that was filled with new issues and questions to consider. However, as scholars explored cultural issues outside of the Eurocentric canon of cultural studies, they encountered spirited resistance. In the edited volume of papers from the "Illinois Conference," a tension arises between cultural studies' foundational literature, its institutionalization, and its ability to productively critique new contexts outside of Europe's purview. Notable papers include Angie Chabram-Dernersesian's "I Throw Punches for My Race, but I Don't Want to Be a Man: Writing Us—Chicana-nos (Girls, Us)/Chicanas—into the Movement Script" and Catherine Hall's "Missionary Stories: Gender and Ethnicity in England in the 1830s and 1840s."⁴⁰ Chabram-Dernersesian's essay critiques the Chicano movement for relying on machoism at the expense of Chicana identity and addresses responses to the movement that highlights Chicana identity and pointedly articulates the need for intersectionality by arguing that sex and gender are not divorced from politics and ethnicity.⁴¹ Embedded in the essays, there is a sustained call towards an intersectional cultural studies ethic, insisting that intersectionality is, or at least should be, integral to cultural studies research because of the prioritization of (inter)relations in prior literature.⁴² This push towards intersectionality was one of many critiques that other fields brought against cultural studies literature, providing a productive deconstruction of the field as it had been built, and offering a hopeful pathway towards a better, reconstructed cultural studies.

The Oklahoma and Illinois conferences gave room for discussion—but the space had to be made, as intersectionality was not a cultural studies theory in origin or application.⁴³ It is fitting, then, that rather than taking place at the Oklahoma or Illinois conferences, the special issue of *Cultural Studies* published in its fourth-ever volume featuring Chicana/o Cultural studies work was the consequence of a conference in a different field. As Fregoso and Chabram-Dernersesian explain in the introduction to the special issue, their panel at the 1989 National Association for Chicano Studies in Los Angeles, entitled "Chicano Cultural Representations: Reframing Alternative Critical Discourse," sought to intervene in the problematic notion of the single Chicana/o identity that sterile academic treatment of the Chicana/o community as artifact cultivates.⁴⁴ Through the use of Hall, whose theories make room for the "critical points of difference" which deeply affect individual Chicana/o identities, Fregoso and Chabram-Dernersesian pushed for a nuanced consideration of Chicana/o existence which broke out of both Chicana/o Studies' and European critical theory's homogenization of difference.⁴⁵















In the issue, the authors questioned the critical foundations, methodologies, and institutionalization of Chicana/o studies and its tentative theoretical neighbor, cultural studies. Alarcón pushed against the presentation of unified Chicana subject, as the intersecting discourses which produce Chicanas (and women of color more broadly) are fundamentally contradictory and produce incoherent subjects.⁴⁶ In her piece within the issue, Chabram-Denerseian argues for an exploration of alternative methodologies, including ethnographies, to resist the “fragmentary and over-specialized” structure of contemporary Chicana/o studies.⁴⁷ Sanchez takes this critique farther and argues that academia is a space that masks its inability to foster change and reinforces class privilege and domination, not-so-subtle co-opting, silencing, or ignoring the resistance of scholars.⁴⁸ These articles, as well as the fact that they appear within *Cultural Studies*, speak to the productive critique that the mission for alliances brought cultural studies more broadly. The desire to disburse the theories and arguments central to cultural studies invited outsiders to move in. With that influx of outside perspectives (and even the perspectives of some within the field), the foundations of cultural studies were suddenly much less secure. However, rather than reacting to these critiques as attacks or incompatibilities, the contemporary editors of *Cultural Studies*, to their credit, gave these issues a forum, ostensibly in the hope of creating meaningful and productive dialogue that might change cultural studies for the better.

This issue laid a foundation for the active inquiry on the usefulness and purpose of difference in cultural studies. It gave voice to the limitations of European critical theory's uncritical application onto outside contexts, and even the limitations of the academic model of ethnic or cultural studies itself.⁴⁹ To attend to the “complexities of a historical experience,” the special issue was dedicated to examining and interrogating self-representations within Chicana/o cultures.⁵⁰ This goal was met and surpassed as pieces such as Chabram-Denerseian and Alarcón's persist as important work on Chicana/o identities and the relationship between identity and culture. At the same time, the energy which animated the issue continues to push scholars to question the taken for granted theoretical and institutional standards of cultural studies.⁵¹

A New Foundation

In 1990, cultural studies scholars were presented a stressful and challenging task: to look back at the foundations of cultural studies through the eyes of other disciplines and thoughtfully consider the ways that our history and canon might fail. Amid political, ecological, and technological change, it could have been easy to ignore the question altogether and recommit blindly to the legacy of British and Australian cultural studies in America. However, if the year 1990 has anything to teach cultural studies scholars as we move forward, it is that, whether we choose to renew our vows to our canon or decide the very foundations of the field must be broken, it is always worthwhile to at least listen and consider the voices of our intellectual peers. Perhaps we will disagree with them, but we may also create a more robust, more productive theory and application. The “Illinois Conference” shows the power of internal reflection within our discipline; the “Oklahoma Conference” shows the willingness of other disciplines to consider and test our arguments; the special issue of *Cultural Studies* in 1990 shows our potential, if we accept and engage those challenges, to come through these discussions as better fields.

Notes

1. Michael Berube, "What's the Matter with Cultural Studies?" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 14, 2009. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Whats-the-Matter-With/48334> <
<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Whats-the-Matter-With/48334>> . 
2. Berube, "What's the Matter." 
3. Cary Nelson, Paula Treichler, and Lawrence Grossberg, "Cultural Studies: An Introduction," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (London: Routledge, 1991). 
4. Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg, "Cultural Studies." 
5. The influential conferences in 1990 include "Cultural Studies Now and in the Future" hosted by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in April 1990, referred to as the "Illinois Conference," and "Crossing the Disciplines: Cultural Studies in the 1990s" hosted by the University of Oklahoma in October 1990, referred to as the "Oklahoma Conference." A key publication from 1990 is a special issue in *Cultural Studies* (volume 4, no. 3) on Chicana/o representations, titled "Chicana/o Cultural Representations: Reframing Alternative Critical Discourses." Papers and commentary from the "Illinois Conference" are featured in the collection *Cultural Studies*, edited by Cary Nelson, Paula Treichler, and Lawrence Grossberg, 1991. 
6. Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg, "Cultural Studies." 
7. Ted Striphas, "Caring for Cultural Studies," *Cultural Studies*, November 8, 2018, 1–16. 
8. John Deely, "Logic within Semiotics," *Semiotics* 10 (1990). The particular term we have used, "fashionable," is taken from John Deely's 1990 publication in *Semiotics*, but arguably represents a broader suspicion of the longevity and ultimate purpose of cultural studies expressed by other scholars. 
9. George H. W. Bush Presidential Library & Museum, "Inaugural Address," *Public Papers*, accessed November 22, 2018, np. 
10. Geoffrey Pridham and Tatu Vanhanen, *Democratization in Eastern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994). 
11. Alan Walters, "Sir Geoffrey Howe's Resignation was Fatal Blow in Mrs. Thatcher's Political Assassination," *Times*, December 6, 1990, 12.; "On Establishment of the Presidency of the Soviet Union and Amendments and Additions to the Constitution (Basic Law) of the Soviet Union," *Constitution of the USSR and the RSFSR*, accessed November 22, 2018, https://web.archive.org/web/20130216085400/http://constitution.garant.ru/history/ussr-rsfsr/1977/red_1977/1549448/chapter/16/. 
12. George H. W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of Congress," Miller Center of Public Affairs., accessed November 22, 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110116162710/http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3425> 
13. Mark Uhlig, "Turnover in Nicaragua; Nicaraguan Opposition Routs Sandinistas; U.S. Pledges Aid, Tied to Orderly Turnover," *New York Times*, February 27, 1990; Sara Fritz, "U.S. Accused of Trying to Buy Election: Nicaragua: The Administration Insists That the \$9 million It Seeks for the Opposition Party is Needed to Offset the Well-financed Sandinistas," *Los Angeles Times*, October 17, 1989. It should be noted that then-President Bush's Administration, in several forms, had extended intervention prior to the Nicaraguan elections. The depth and long-lasting impact of this intervention, of which Violetta Chamorro's election can be considered a part, is a complex issue we cannot hope to address here adequately, and this very concise summary should not indicate any uncritical support of these actions. 
14. Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (104 Stat. 2468, Pub. L. 101-549). 
15. Janet Abbate, *Inventing the Internet* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000). There are, of course, earlier and contemporary sources within government documents (such as the ARPANET Completion

- Report), which discuss the eventual decommission of ARPANET. However, the governmental sources lacked a definitive date and explanation of the deconstruction of the project, which modern sources more reliably relate. [↗](#)
16. We acknowledge that Berners-Lee himself discusses his success on this project beginning in 1989, rather than 1990. However, while Berners-Lee had already begun his attempts to create a sustainable network in 1989, Berners' degrees of success were only beginning to leak to the public during 1990, so his previous successes in 1989 aren't forefronted here because they lacked popular awareness. [↗](#)
 17. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, cultural studies was a common topic of discussion at academic conferences through panels. Echoing the sentiments of multiple scholars, including Cary Nelson, we regard the "Illinois Conference" as the first major conference devoted explicitly to cultural studies rather than simply included as panel topics. For further discussion of other conferences, see Cary Nelson, "Always Already Cultural Studies: Two Conferences and a Manifesto," *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 24, no. 1 (1991): 24–25. [↗](#)
 18. Cary Nelson, Paula Treichler, and Lawrence Grossberg, "Cultural Studies: A Users Guide to This Book," in *Cultural Studies*, edited by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (London: Routledge, 1991), 17–23. [↗](#)
 19. Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg, "Cultural Studies," 11. [↗](#)
 20. Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg, "Cultural Studies," 11. [↗](#)
 21. Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg, "Cultural Studies: A Users Guide to This Book," 1. The sixteen themes used for organization were the history of cultural studies; gender and sexuality; nationhood and national identity; colonialism and postcolonialism; race and ethnicity; popular culture and its audiences; identity politics; pedagogy; politics of aesthetics; culture and its institutions; ethnography and cultural studies; politics of disciplinarity; discourse and textuality; science, culture, and the ecosystem; rereading history; and global culture in a postmodern age. The papers crossed anywhere from two to four themes. [↗](#)
 22. Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg, "Cultural Studies," 2. [↗](#)
 23. Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg, "Cultural Studies," 2. [↗](#)
 24. Rosalind Brunt, "Engaging With the Popular: Audiences For Mass Culture and What To Say About Them," in *Cultural Studies*, 69–81; James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures," in *Cultural Studies*, 96–117; John Fiske, "Cultural Studies and the Culture of Everyday Life," in *Cultural Studies*, 154–174; Simon Frith, "The Cultural Study of Popular Music," in *Cultural Studies*, 174–187; Constance Penley, "Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Study of Popular Culture," in *Cultural Studies*, 479–500. [↗](#)
 25. Brunt, "Engaging with the Popular," 78–80. [↗](#)
 26. Brunt, "Engaging with the Popular," 78. [↗](#)
 27. Brunt, "Engaging with the Popular," 80. [↗](#)
 28. Clifford, "Traveling Cultures," 97. [↗](#)
 29. These issues were *Cultural Studies* 6, no. 2, 301–305 (1992); *Cultural Studies* 7, no. 2, 344–348 (1993); *Cultural Studies* 8, no. 1, 184–188 (1994). [↗](#)
 30. Susan Huddleston Edgerton, *Multiculturalism into Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 18. The origin of this quote is uncertain; Huddleston-Edgerton cites Con Davis-Undiano as the author in her work and correlates this with the "Oklahoma Conference" as she covers the boon of cultural studies interest in the early 1990s. Noting that Con Davis-Undiano and Scheifler were both said to have spoken at the conference, this quotation may be from either a conference presentation or a keystone speaking event. Without any other record of this statement, we will cite Huddleston Edgerton's text for this quotation. [↗](#)
 31. John Deely, "Logic within Semiotics," *Semiotics* 10 (1990): 77–86.; Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (Brooklyn: Verso, 1992). It is difficult to find a particular moment

from either Deely's or Ahmad's texts to encapsulate their critiques and suspicions of cultural studies. Deely, who was then editor of *Semiotics* and a recent president of the Semiotics Society of America, tended to summarize his distaste for cultural studies on the grounds of its apparent lack of coherency and staying power. Ahmad, a vocal and well-regarded post-colonial literary theorist, instead critiqued the critical foundations of cultural studies, arguing that postmodern and post-structural materialisms lacked real-world motivations and applications, especially within post-coloniality. This is, at best, a minimal summary of their complex opinions, and we encourage you to see the referenced citations for a more thorough entrée into their works. [↗](#)

32. Deely, "Logic"; Ahmad, *In Theory*; Aijaz Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory,'" *Social Text* 17 (1987): 3–25. Ahmad is, in his own right, an influential figure in cultural studies, and has provided many pivotal critiques which have helped form cultural studies as it is today. Ahmad leveled an extensive critique of Jameson's work in particular, including the obliterative homogeneity his approach assumed and its lack of intellectual rigor. Likewise, Ahmad's lengthy critique of Said pointed out his reproduction of liberal humanism in his efforts to resist it and singled out his tendency to uphold singular texts as cultural monoliths. The particular critiques we reference, which include arguments made in "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory'" and *In Theory*, do not refer to many of the more pivotal contributions Ahmad is responsible for in the interest of space and clarity. [↗](#)
33. Meaghan Morris, "Banality in Cultural Studies," in *Logics of Television*, edited by Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). Morris's main argument of this particular essay is more deeply centered on the transformation of cultural studies into a saleable, desirable intellectual industry, intervening in its ability to produce "original or heterodox" work within the cultural studies institution. These critiques, while still playing towards the tension surrounding institutionalization, are left out in favor of her ultimate conclusion, that the state of cultural studies around the 1990s discredited the politics it was supposed to serve. [↗](#)
34. Huddleston Edgerton, *Multiculturalism*, 17. [↗](#)
35. Huddleston Edgerton, *Multiculturalism*, 18. [↗](#)
36. Nelson, "Always Already Cultural Studies," 24–38; Jeffrey R. Di Leo, "Cultural Studies, Semiotics, and the Politics of Repacking Theory," in *Academic Degree Zero: Reconsidering the Politics of Higher Education* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 89–101. [↗](#)
37. Di Leo, "Cultural Studies, Semiotics," 95–101. [↗](#)
38. Robert Con Davis-Uniado and Ronald Schleifer, editors, *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies* (London: Pearson, 1998). [↗](#)
39. "Robert Con Davis-Undiano," College of Arts and Sciences, Department of English, University of Oklahoma, accessed November 22, 2018, <http://www.ou.edu/cas/english/about/faculty/robert-con-davis-undiano>. [↗](#)
40. Chabram-Dernersesian, Angie, "I Throw Punches For My Race, But I Don't Want to Be a Man: Writing Us—Chica-nos (Girl, Us)/Chicanas—into the Movement Script," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Larry Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (London: Pearson, 1998), 81–95. [↗](#)
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